



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## JUDICIAL REVIEW COUNCIL

February 24, 2017

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing

RE: Governor's Budget Recommendation for the FY2018-FY2019 Biennium  
Judicial Review Council

Good Evening, Chairs Olsten, Formica and Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony. Please allow me to introduce myself, along with my recently appointed successor. I am Dennis J. O'Connor; I was the Director of the Judicial Review Council (JRC) from 8/29/2014 until my retirement on 2/16/2017 at the close of business. My successor is Attorney Judith Rossi, who was appointed by Governor Malloy, effective 2/17/2017.

We are jointly submitting this document because of my experience with budgeting issues and because Attorney Rossi has been "in this chair" for the last week.

The JRC is fortunate to have one full-time staff member, Administrative Assistant Sharon Dexler. My Administrative Assistant and I have had first-hand experience with the budgetary reductions that commenced approximately December, 2015 and have continued to this day. The Executive Director's position is part-time. In sum, JRC has one and a half employees.

Our statutory obligations include duplication, in some form, of complaints received by our office and the distribution of those complaints in their entirety to the judges, who are the subjects of the complaints, and to the Council members. This process is done via US Mail and electronically. The aforementioned distributive process is time sensitive because of our statutory scheme. The next event is the investigation of the complaints by the Executive Director, the placing of the complaints on a monthly agenda, and, when needed, further investigation and discussion by the Executive Director and the Council, respectively. Once a decision is reached by the Council, there are narrow time constraints for the Council's Executive Director to notify both the complainant and the respondent of the results. This is done via the US Mail system.

Our Council members are appointed by the Governor and are approved by the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee, as well as the House and Senate. They are comprised of three groups: 3 judges who are regular members, 3 attorneys who are regular members and 6 "public" (non-lawyer) regular members. It should be noted that our Council members come from all over Connecticut. Unlike some commissions or councils in state government, our

members receive neither a per diem payment, nor do they receive mileage reimbursement. At present, one member comes all the way to and from Westport for our monthly meetings in Hartford.

Administrative Assistant Dexler and I have made it a practice to review our budget frequently. We have had the good fortune to be provided with a monthly "B-66" statement from the Fiscal Officer of our former umbrella agency, OGA, and since July 1, 2016, from the Department of Administrative Services. We have survived and performed our necessary services despite the aforementioned reductions. We realize that the state's fiscal status is tenuous at best. Ms. Dexler and I are cautious about our expenditure because we wear "three hats" - taxpayer, public servant, and service providers. We have in the past, and will in the future, live within the budget allocation and perform our statutory obligations.

Very truly yours,

Dennis J. O'Connor, Executive Director, 8/29/2014-02/16/2017

Judith Rossi, Executive Director, 02/17/2017-2/17/2019

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